General Discussion of the Budget.—(*cont.*)

President.—We shall now resume the general discussion of the Budget and the official members will speak.

Mr. MATHEW KOLADI VATAKKOT (*Kunnamkulam*).

Sir, I want to get some explanation. I desire to know whether the resolutions submitted to this House are in the order in which they were ballotted ?

President.—Yes. They should be. The Secretary will see that it is so.

Mr. T. K. KRISHNA MENON (*Secretary to the Legislative Council*).

Yes, Sir. It is so, as far as they go.

Mr. K. GOVINDA MENON (*Conservator of Forests*).

Sir, Allow me to thank His Highness our Maharaja for the inauguration of this Council, where we, the official members, are given opportunities to meet the elected representatives of His Highness' subjects and to explain to them the mistakes they were and are labouring under. All officials are usually attacked in the public Press, and we are not in a position to defend ourselves. In this august body we are enabled to meet the people's representatives face to face and remove misapprehensions. With this short preamble, I will reply to the charges levelled at the Forest and Tram-Departments.

I will first take my own department. The member for Chalakkudi had stated in this House, Sir, that timber got collected at Pattikkad side for Rs. 9 a candy had been sold at Rs. 3 a candy, thus causing to the Darbar a net loss of Rs. 6 a candy. I grieve to say that this statement is correct to some extent, but incorrect to a very great extent. I am sorry that he believed it in truth, partly, but did not take the trouble to probe deep into the matter. About 1,300 candies of timber—I regret, I cannot give exact figures to you—were collected at Pattikkad at a rate of, not Rs. 9 a candy, but Rs. 7-8-0 a candy. About 1,000 candies of these were sold at various rates ranging from Rs. 15 to Rs. 25. I can safely assume an average of Rs. 20 a candy. Thus, for 1,000 candies we got Rs. 20,000. The balance of about 300 candies was very bad stock,

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not even fit for fuel, and had to be sold at Rs. 3 a candy, thus realising Rs. 900. The gross result of the transaction is Rs. 20,900, and deducting the charges of collection Rs. 9,750 at Rs. 7—8—0 a candy, the net profit of the business is Rs. 11,150. I leave you, Sir, to deduce if the transaction was profitable or otherwise.

One member had remarked that *kole* cultivators have to pay a higher seigniorage amount for bamboos than merchants The bamboos of the forests, he refers to, are sold, after inviting tenders to merchants at Rs. 3 to 4 a 100. The sanctioned seigniorage rate for bamboos is Rs. 5 a 100. The purchaser who gets the contract, after the tender, is bound down to pay and remove a fixed number per year. Whether he removes or not, he has to pay for that number. I believe, if I remember correctly, that that number is 1,50,000, as the whole contract was for 3 lakhs to be paid for and removed in two years' time. All others who require bamboos for their own use have to pay seigniorage at the rate of Rs. 5 a 100. This system had been in vogue, not for one year but for many years. If the member who complained that he and gentlemen like him did not like to pay the usual seigniorage of Rs. 5 a 100, he or his friends could have tendered, when tenders were called for, and obtained the monopoly. It is not within my power to reduce the sanctioned seigniorage rate.

One member criticised the appointment of the Elephant Vicharippu when, as he said, a man from service had been got specially trained for the treatment of elephants. It is true, Sir, that an officer of the Veterinary department had been got trained for 6 months under the Elephant Treatment Department of the Madras Presidency. He was appointed, on his return, to look after and treat the Sirkar elephants. But most unluckily for him (I would put it in that way) the casualities of our valuable stock during his regime was rather heavy and reached about 3 to 4 a year. We could not afford to wait any further. A change of doctor was resorted to, and our casualities since then for two years is only one. The Elephant Vicharippu comes from a family who were hereditary elephant doctors from time immemorial.

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Dr A. G. MENON (*Tattamangalam*).

Is he still in the service?

Mr. K. GOVINDA MENON (*Conservator of Forests*).

Sir, he is still in the service.

Mr. MATHEW KOLADI VADAKKOT (*Kunnamkulam*).

Whom do you mean?

Mr. K. GOVINDA MENON (*Conservator of Forests*).

It is Mr. Eapen.

Mr. CHAKKO CHERUVATHUR (*Vadakkancheri*).

Is it because the man was incompetent or whether the veterinary treatment was unfit for elephants?

Mr. K. GOVINDA MENON (*Conservator of Forests*).

Sir, the results of his treatment were unsuccessful.

Mr. C. A. OUSEPH (*Chalakkudi*).

May I know, Sir, the number of casualities during the year before his appointment?

President.—Are the figures available?

Mr. K. GOVINDA MENON (*Conservator of Forests*).

The figures are not available.

President.—You could look into the records and prepare the figures.

Mr. K. GOVINDA MENON (*Conservator of Forests*).

It is not possible to do so now. I have to get it from my office, Sir.

The necessity of having a Hospital at Kuriyarkutti has been questioned by one member and its abolition recommended. There are, Sir, about 300 souls under Sirkar employ working in malarial tracts from Vellikulangara to Parambikulam, besides about an equal number working for and under our various contractors. For these 600 souls a Hospital is located at about the centre of the malarial district at Kuriyarkutti. The doctor in charge is not to stick to the Hospital or to any one place, but to travel up and down the line over which the employees are scattered. The up-keep of the Hospital is budgetted to cost Rs. 1,557 in 1101. The Hospital is an absolute necessity, and its abolition will add untold misery and result in high mortality. If the

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Kuriyarkutti Hospital is abolished, the nearest place of medical aid is Chalakkudi, before reaching which many of the sufferers are likely to come to grief.

Mr. C. A. OUSEPH (*Chalakkudi*).

May I know, in this connection, whether the Sub-Assistant Surgeon is residing permanently at Kuriyarkutti?

Mr. K. GOVINDA MENON (*Conservator of Forests*).

His place of residence is Chalakkudi. He has to travel up and down the Tram.

Mr. CHAKKO CHERUVATHUR (*Vadakkancheri*).

May I know what is the daily attendance in the Dispensary at Kuriyarkutti?

Mr. K. GOVINDA MENON (*Conservator of Forests*).

Sir, I am sorry, I have not got the figures.

Lastly, Sir, I have to answer the charges levelled at the so-called "White Elephant" of the State. I must first tell this House that I am not in direct charge of the Tramway Department, but I only give transport works to it. Its maintenance and administration are under a separate technical expert directly under the orders of the Diwan—as the other Heads of Departments are. The non-official members of this House have been almost unanimous in their criticisms of the Forest—Tramway. This proves conclusively the misunderstanding that even our educated public are labouring under.

Mr. C. A. OUSEPH (*Chalakkudi*).

May I inform the member, Sir, that there is no misunderstanding. That was the statement which was made by me personally.

President.—Please hear his explanation fully.

Mr. A. B. SALEM (*Jews*).

May I know whether one member can rise up and inform another member inside this House? I have heard of a rule that one member cannot rise up and inform another member of the House.

Mr. K. GOVINDA MENON (*Conservator of Forests*).

If the Tramway were an entirely separate department having nothing whatever to do with my department, and its business was to spend Rs. 1,79,200 and

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earn Rs. 13,500, as the elected members of this House are seen to have learned from the budget of 1101, I would be the first to request for and recommend its abolition and to scrap it up. But, Sir, the state of affairs is quite different. I shall try to bring home to the members the position of the Tramway by a clear illustration.

A merchant at Vyttila has his grains stored up in a granary there. His market is at Ernakulam. At Vyttila his grains fetch him nothing, but at Ernakulam they give him a gross receipt of Rs. 50,000 a year. He has to cart them to Ernakulam and to sell them ; and there is no other outlet but one cart-road. No carts are also available. He has purchased a couple of carts, the maintenance charges of which come to Rs. 2 a day or Rs. 730 a year. Incidentally, his carts sometimes get a passenger or two and earn an average of Rs. 5 a month or Rs. 60 a year. It is here clear, Sir, that, viewed quite separately, the merchant incurs an expenditure of Rs. 730 yearly to earn Rs. 60 annually.

If this House would, in the circumstances stated above, recommend the sale forthwith of the carts of the merchant, they could as well request the Government for the abolition of the Tramway. The Government has to spend Rs. 1,79,200 for the up-keep of the Tramway in 1101. The budgetted revenue of my department for 1101, from timber removed by Sirkar agency, is Rs. 3,93,655. The whole of this amount except Rs. 2,35,000 is derived by the sale of timber got down by the Tramway. An amount of Rs. 6,000 is earned under the head of seigniorage from produce received by consumers through the Tramway. Thus the total Forest revenues for 1101, from produce got down by the Tramway, is Rs. 3,76,155.

We will consider for a moment, Sir, that the Tramway has been scrapped up. At once the Forest revenue goes down to Rs. 2,37,445. We will see how this affects the general budget of the State. The budgetted revenue for 1101 is Rs. 70,60,300. Deducting the amount that the Forest Department could not get, the general revenue reduces itself to Rs. 66,84,145.

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We will now consider the expenditure side. The budgetted amount for 1101 is Rs. 71,98,300. When the Tramway is abolished, there is a saving of Rs. 1,79,200, and the Forest Department would be able to save, in the shape of conservancy and establishments charges, to the extent of Rs. 97,800. The general expenditure thus gets reduced to Rs. 69,21,300. Sir, as it is, our budget is one of a deficit of Rs. 1,38,800. The abolition of the Tramway does not better our position but makes us a worse bankrupt, and our deficit for 1101 is increased to Rs. 2,37,155. The amount of Rs. 13,000 budgetted as Tramway revenue for 1101 is purely a wind-fall. With the abolition of the line, this amount does not come in, and our liability increases by that amount. I hope, Sir, I have explained the position of the Tramway clearly to this House.

The member for the South Ezhuva constituency had remarked that the purpose of the Tramway had been served, that there is no more timber in the Forests tapped by the Tramway, and that, if there is any, it may be left for private agencies to exploit and transport. I assure this House that the present Tramline has enough work to go on for at least 7 or 8 years more, and hence its object has not been fully attained. If I may take the liberty to do so, I would extend my cordial invitation to the Ezhuva member for a visit to the Parambikulam forests, and I would request him to make it convenient for his visit between the months of Kumbham and Medam, when the forests are open, and there is no fear of leech bites. I would also challenge him to find out a private agency who would exploit those forests and get the timber down without the help of the Tramline.

Mr. M. K. RAMAN (*Ezhuva South*).

May I know whether there is any private agency now, besides this Tramway ?

Mr. K. GOVINDA MENON (*Conservator of Forests*).

No, Sir, not worth mentioning.

One member had recommended to the Government the amalgamation of the Tramway with the Forest Department. Till 1084, the Tramway Department was part and parcel of and an adjunct to the

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Forest Department; and for its better and quicker administration, it was made an independent department directly under the Diwan. If brought under the Forest Department, it effects no savings, as all the technical heads, as at present exist, have to be there; but it causes some delay to the rolling of the administrative machinery.

The member for Chalakkudi asked me, when I was answering questions, whether the Government policy was to spend more money. I think their decision will make it clear. We cannot but maintain the Tramway at present, and keep it in good order too, unless we want to give up the Forest revenue.

I hope, I have made clear to this House the interdependence of the Forest and Tramway Departments, and that its existence, till we work out all the timbers of the forests tapped by the Tramline, is a necessary evil.

Mr. V. K. ARAVINDAKSHA MENON (*Chief Engineer*).

I have listened with great interest to the discussion of the various items in the budget for 1101 in the Council for the last two days. I consider it a great privilege to have had the opportunity of placing before the chosen representatives of our people some outstanding features of the work that we are going to do in the department placed under my charge, and clear certain wrong notions which the people have regarding certain questions connected with it. I have made exhaustive notes on the points raised in the Council by the different members, and I shall deal with them presently in their respective places.

The P. W. D. budget is classed mainly under four important headings, viz., Communications, Buildings, Irrigation works and the Mechanical Department Under "Communications" many original works are seen budgetted. In the Cochin-Kanayannur Taluk, we have the construction of the Panamkutti and the Kundannur bridges and the special repairs to some important roads like Chittur.

Dr. A. G. MENON (*Vattamangalam*).

Southern Chittur or Northern Chittur ?

Mr. V. K. ARAVINDAKSHA MENON (*Chief Engineer*).

Southern Chittur.

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The Chittur, Edappalli and Palarivattam roads have not received adequate attention hitherto.

In the Mukundapuram Taluk, we have an outstanding figure, the special renewals to the Thommana road, which is a very widely used thoroughfare, lying between the Irinjalakkuda Railway station and the town. Next, we are opening a new road between the Irinjalakkuda Anchal Office and the Parayankadavu road.

In the Trichur Taluk, a proposal for widening the ghaut sections of the Vaniampara road is budgetted, and I am sure this work will be very much appreciated. These portions refer mainly to places near the Kuthiran peak and the 4 hair-pin turns further away. Next in importance is the construction of a bridge in the middle of the new Mullur-Kayal embankment, which forms a connection from Trichur to Guruvayur, &c., without having to take the circuitous route through Kunnamkulam.

Mr. C. A. OUSEPH (*Chalakkudi*).

Sir, May I ask whether there was any bridge already there?

Mr. V. K. ARAVINDAKSHA MENON (*Chief Engineer*).

We have got two bridges, but they are at a very high level. Hence we propose a new bridge.

President.—What about the Korayar?

Mr. V. K. ARAVINDAKSHA MENON (*Chief Engineer*).

We have proposed to have a ferry service there.

Mr. A. EACHARA MENON (*Chittur*).

Sir, What will be the cost of the ferry?

Mr. V. K. ARAVINDAKSHA MENON (*Chief Engineer*).

Rs. 500.

This work is similar in conception to that of the Perumpuzha causeway and, when completed, it is sure to be a very beautiful piece of road-engineering ever attempted by the State.

Now, turning to the Talappalli Taluk, we find that it takes the lion's share of the allotment for Communications-Original. We hope to complete the bridge over the Cheerakuzhi river, connecting Tiruvilluamala with the mainland, by the December of next year,

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and by so doing, I hope, a long-felt want will be supplied. Further, we have already started on a new road, connecting the Kakkad and Cheralayam roads, though the works at present, unfortunately, are at a stand-still, due to the non-sympathetic attitude of some of the prominent landholders there. Proposals for a road to Machad are under the consideration of the Government.

Mr. CHAKKO CHERUVATHUR (*Vadakkancheri*).

May I know, Sir, whether any petition was submitted for the extension of the Vakils' room in Vadakkancheri ?

Mr. V. K. ARAVINDAKSHA MENON (*Chief Engineer*).

Yes, there was.

Mr. CHAKKO CHERUVATHUR (*Vadakkancheri*).

May I know what steps have been taken on that petition?

Mr. V. K. ARAVINDAKSHA MENON (*Chief Engineer*)

We have already taken steps to increase the accommodation.

Mr. CHAKKO CHERUVATHUR (*Vadakkancheri*).

When was the building completed, according to the old contract and handed over to the P. W. D.?

Mr. V. K. ARAVINDAKSHA MENON (*Chief Engineer*).

I cannot say exactly. Last month or so.

Mr. CHAKKO CHERUVATHUR (*Vadakkancheri*).

May I know when the petition from the Vakils reached the department?

President.—What is it that you want? You want to increase the accommodation. Is that all?

Mr. CHAKKO CHERUVATHUR (*Vadakkancheri*).

My difficulty is this: a petition was put in by the Vakils before the construction began, before the work was actually started; and now, that petition is kept in abeyance or is lying idle. The whole construction is over and was handed over to the P. W. D.

President.—You are referring to the irregularities

Mr. CHAKKO CHERUVATHUR (*Vadakkancheri*).

This could have been done before the building was over. This was my difficulty, and I have explained it. That is why I was asking for the information.

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Mr. V. K. ARAVINDAKSHA MENON (*Chief Engineer*)

Now, in the Chittur Taluk, we are opening the Nurni-Mungilmada road next year, the estimated cost of constructing it being about Rs. 48,000.

Dr. A. G. MENON (*Tattamangalam*).

Is it for the whole portion?

Mr. V. K. ARAVINDAKSHA MENON (*Chief Engineer*).

Only for a few miles. Then, we are completing a bridge over the Velanthavalam river, which, when completed, will afford easier access to Coimbatore for the people of that taluk.

Under "Communications—Maintenance", it is seen that a sum of Rs. 1,66,000 is budgetted. This expenditure is for the up-keep and renewal of the roads already in existence. I shall briefly state the method by which these maintenance rates are arrived at.

Dr. A. G. MENON (*Tattamangalam*).

May I know whether the rules have been published for the information of the public?

Mr. V. K. ARAVINDAKSHA MENON (*Chief Engineer*).

Yes, Sir. They were published as long ago as 1084, i. e. 16 years ago.

Dr. A. G MENON (*Tattamangalam*).

May I know whether the Government was following those rules only, till now? They are making investigations.

Mr. V. K. ARAVINDAKSHA MENON (*Chief Engineer*).

The result of the investigations is published for the information of the ryots and the public.

Dr. A. G. MENON (*Tattamangalam*).

There is no use of criticising the actions or the requests or the petition of the people of Chittur. We are now in the dark. We do not know what the Government are going to do. Chittur is a big agricultural taluk entirely dependent upon irrigation works.

Mr. V. K. ARAVINDAKSHA MENON (*Chief Engineer*).

Every road is considered separately while estimating, and we fix a certain number of years as its normal life. The expenditure required for renewing

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the whole length of the road is divided by the number of years fixed, the result giving us the allotment required for the year for the road. It may, therefore, be seen that any cuts made in the grants proposed will eventually ruin the roads in the long run. In the Appendix entitled "Buildings Original", it will be seen that all the works that are done by the P. W. D. are for the benefit of some department or other, and I don't enter into the question of their utility in so far as they will be explained by the respective Heads of Departments.

Next, we have a very important section, i. e., Irrigation. In the Cochin-Kanayannur Taluk, the principal problem which the Engineering Department has to face in this connection is one of drainage more than anything else.

For this purpose, you will find that a very generous grant is made, notably for opening a canal in Narakkal and Nayarambalam, besides the improvements to the Uppattikad canal and sluices at Chellanam. We have this year constructed about 4 sluices in this latter place, and it is indeed very gratifying to note how well they work and what great relief they are giving to the ryots in that place.

Dr. A. G. MENON (*Tattamangalam*).

Sir, may I bring to the notice of the member that in the Land Revenue Department there is set apart a sum of a lakh of rupees at least, the probable cost of the soil of reclaimed lands and disafforested lands. There was an existing notification to the effect that that the sum will be utilised for the irrigation systems of the Chittur Taluk by transferring it from the Revenue Department.

Mr. V. K. ARAVINDAKSHA MENON (*Chief Engineer*).

But the question is whether it is possible to spend that money during this time for the work.

Next, in Trichur Taluk, we have provided a sum of Rs. 35,000 for permanent improvements to the Enamakkal bund. You will remember that this ancient bund which once separated the territories of the Cochin Raja from those of the Zamorin was very badly

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destroyed by the floods of last year. When the question of reconstruction came, it was thought advisable to increase the vent-way of the weir so as to afford better facility for the drainage of the flood water into the sea and consequently to reduce the flood level of the land. Estimates for this are ready, and they are waiting the formal approval of the British Government who will have to pay half the cost of construction.

Next, I shall deal with the Irrigation systems in the Chittur Taluk. A sum of Rs. 12,000 is seen budgetted for the improvements of the Mulattura Irrigation system. I note that some of the members are disappointed with this small grant, and that they are under the impression that this system is not receiving adequate attention from the Government.

Dr. A. G. MENON (*Tattamangalam*).

May I ask the member whether any system was dealt with, other than the Mulattura system?

Mr. V. K. ARAVINDAKSHA MENON (*Chief Engineer*).

The Mulattura system only is dealt with. A definite programme of work is under investigation.

I hasten to point out that we have on hand at present a definite and most complete programme of work to be done in this system in the next few years. Among them there is none more important than that regarding the canals for the first ten miles of its length. This work consists of rock blasting and lowering the canal bed wherever there are humps and reverse gradients. Survey for this work was made and levels taken and the work of the Surveyor carefully checked, and a consolidated estimate for Rs. 40,000 prepared and submitted to the Government for sanction last year, with a proposal to carry out the work in 3 stages, spread over as many years. And I was made to understand the Government would have granted all the Rs. 40,000 for the next year, had it been possible to spend it all in that time. The limitation imposed by time to do this work was the deciding factor. It is possible to do work on this canal only for about 40 days in a year, as it is to be

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used for irrigation purposes for the rest of the time. Further, the nature of the work is such that more could not be satisfactorily done during that time. This was the reason why the whole of the estimated cost was not budgetted for the next year.

The Mechanical Department looks after many smaller sections under it, many of which seem to be non-votable.

I am sorry to find there is a good deal of adverse feeling among the members regarding the grant for the Mattancheri Electric Supply. I am confident that this feeling is occasioned through a lack of knowledge of details in this connection. I shall briefly explain the circumstances under which this proposal for grant was made. In 1099 Messrs. Crompton & Co. decided to put into active operation an Electric Lighting Plant to supply lights, fans and power to the residents of British Cochin. Then the Councillors of Mattancheri desired me to design a lighting installation for them, primarily to know how much it would cost to instal and maintain it and to have a clear understanding of its financial possibilities. Accordingly, I set to work at it, and I presented an estimate to the Mattancheri Municipality which was discussed before a full meeting. It was then laid before the Council that the estimated cost would be about a lakh of rupees, and electricity could be sold at the rate of 5 as. a unit.

Mr. C. A. OUSEPH (*Chalakkudi*).

Was there any opposition in the Council?

Mr. V. K. ARAVINDAKSHA MENON (*Chief Engineer*).

There was some opposition, but the majority was for it.

Mr. A. B. SALEM (*Jews*).

May I know, in this connection, whether there were any rival persons who came forward to undertake this scheme?

Mr. V. K. ARAVINDAKSHA MENON (*Chief Engineer*).

I am not aware of any.

Mr. T. A. RAMACHANDRA AYYAR (*Nellayi*).

Sir, is it so very urgent to start the thing this year? Can't we wait for another year?

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Mr. V. K. ARAVINDAKSHA MENON (*Chief Engineer*).

It is not an expenditure. It is only an investment. If we do not start very early, others will. The member knows already they have got Electric lighting in British Cochin, and it is desirable that we too should have the service.

Mr. S. S. KODER (*Mattancheri*).

May not the Government, instead of taking shares, advance them loans at 10 per cent interest?

Mr. T. A. RAMACHANDRA AYYAR (*Nellayi*).

Will you please give me information on a certain point? A road nearly a mile and two furlongs in length has been under construction for the last four or five years in Trikkur, and it is in a shameful condition now.

Mr. A. B. SALEM (*Jews*).

Is "shameful" a parliamentary word?

Mr. T. A. RAMACHANDRA AYYAR (*Nellayi*).

Is that also included in the budget?

Mr. V. K. ARAVINDAKSHA MENON (*Chief Engineer*).

There is no allotment for the repair of the Trikkur road in the budget. It is proposed to be abandoned.

The Electric Supply Scheme would pay a handsome dividend of 11 per cent. The Council, after lengthy discussion, favoured the scheme. Then, it appears, they applied to the Government for a loan of a lakh of rupees to carry out the scheme, but their request was refused.

Mr. C. A. OUSEPH (*Chalakkudi*).

May I know whether there has been a written communication from the Mattancheri merchants with regard to the supply of electricity?

President.—What do you think about having fans and lights to this Hall also?

Mr. V. K. ARAVINDAKSHA MENON (*Chief Engineer*).

I strongly recommend it.

The Government, however, allowed the Municipality to raise a debenture loan, if possible, for the purpose. By the evident inability of the Council to take up this additional responsibility, it looked as if the

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scheme would not work. In the meantime, Messrs. Crompton & Co. worked steadily on in British Cochin and their works were nearing completion. Their irreducible rates were declared to be 8 as. a unit, and ours 5 as. with 11 per cent profit. If the Cochin State would not have a Lighting Plant of its own, it then seemed certain that an outside agency would supply this power, and a good deal of Cochin money would be drawn out of the State by the industry of an outsider. The merchants in Cochin were sorry for this happening, and appeared before the Diwan, putting-forth a proposal saying that they would find out three-fourths of the cost, if the Government would take shares to the extent of the remaining one-fourth and further place at their disposal the services of our Engineering Department, in this connection. The Government were inclined to favour this position. They could not bear to see the heavy economic loss the people of Cochin would be put to, if an outside agency were allowed to exploit the possibilities of supply of electric light and power in Mattancheri and later on in Ernakulam, especially when Cochin becomes a port like Bombay and Madras, which, it is hoped, it will some day be. I wish to emphasise that this figure of Rs. 25,000 is not to be considered as an expenditure but as an investment which would give a dividend of about 11 per cent. In this respect, it is different from proposals for improving sanitation and water supply; for any expenditure for the latter, however serviceable and urgent they may be for the people of Mattancheri, is not remunerative from a financial point of view. Therefore, the Electric Lighting Scheme is essentially different from the others, and hence cannot be compared with those of sanitation and water supply for the purpose of determining which of them is more useful or more urgent. One is an investment and the other an irredeemable expenditure from a financial point of view.

In these days of rapid progress in every direction, and with special regard to Mattancheri, which town will expand beyond expectations with the advent of the Harbour, we have to foresee things and prepare ourselves for such expansions, and if we don't, it is possible that, as in this case, others will step in and exploint us to our disadvantage.

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For the College Gas and Electric Plant, provision is made for the next year for installing a new engine to look after the increased duty which will rest on that installation with the introduction of the First Grade College and the X-ray Laboratory.

We have provided a sum of Rs. 15,000 for the upkeep and maintenance of the Dredger and Pulsometer.

Mr. C. A. OUSEPH (*Chalakkudi*).

Sir, regarding the Dredger, may I know whether it was on account of neglect that it reached the present condition in which we find it now?

President.—Is it not second-hand?

Mr. V. K. ARAVINDAKSHA MENON (*Chief Engineer*).

It was bought first-hand, but it was 10 or 12 years old, and the present condition was brought about by some amount of neglect, I must say.

Mr. C. A. OUSEPH (*Chalakkudi*).

May we expect any revenue from the department, if it is repaired?

Mr. V. K. ARAVINDAKSHA MENON (*Chief Engineer*).

Last year we got Rs. 28,000 from the Canal department.

Mr. A. B. SALEM (*Jews*).

May I know whether fishing boats also are licensed?

Mr. V. K. ARAVINDAKSHA MENON (*Chief Engineer*).

If it is less than one ton, it is not licensed.

Dr. A. G. MENON (*Tattamangalam*).

On behalf of the Chittur constituency, I request the Chief Engineer to lay down a definite programme for Irrigation in the Chittur Taluk.

Mr. V. K. ARAVINDAKSHA MENON (*Chief Engineer*).

I shall do so, if the Government so orders.

Mr. MATHEW KOLADI VATAKKOT (*Kunnamkulam*).

May I know what is the policy followed by the Bombay Government? Any reference made to the Bombay Government?

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Mr. V. K. ARAVINDAKSHA MENON (*Chief Engineer*).

Our State is surrounded by Travancore and the District of British Malabar, and I am only referring to the policy followed there in connection with our canals.

Mr. MATHEW KOLADI VATAKKOT (*Kunnamkulam*).

With regard to the Madras Presidency alone?

Mr. V. K. ARAVINDAKSHA MENON (*Chief Engineer*).

Yes, I am speaking of the Madras Presidency alone. Our Dredger, which is a useful machine for deepening back-waters and canals, is now about ten years old, and is in need of thorough repairs.

For Water-Works one lakh of rupees is seen provided. This includes, besides establishment and regular working charges, the construction of a storage reservoir of half a million gallon capacity and the purchase and construction of another filter

The Canal Navigation department is one against which I heard some criticisms levelled during this sitting. The chief among them was that the receipts were so small in proportion to the expenditure that the department is not worthwhile to be run. The establishment charges proper came to about Rs. 6,000 in 1099, while the receipts were about Rs. 28,000. A further sum of Rs. 6,000 is seen entered in the accounts of 1099 as expenditure, but it must not be mistaken for an unserviceable item. This includes a sum of Rs. 4,500 given for the removal of several fishing stakes in the back-waters for the improvement of navigation. The major portion of the expenditure under "Miscellaneous" is for the construction of jetties or deepening of canals or for effecting other conveniences for navigation. It will be seen from the above that this department is one of the most hopeful departments of the State in point of revenue as well as service.

I am aware, Sir, that there is a general trend of feeling among the members that the P. W. D. works so slow, takes so long to accomplish things, does not do simple things properly and a host of other defects. Some of these charges are very true indeed, and during the last year I had occasion to study the defects very closely, and I think I have formulated a definite line of action to correct these evils as far as possible. It

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has to be appreciated, however, that we are faced with certain difficult obstacles in the discharge of our work, viz., a complicated Account Code, co-operation with the different departments, which spells delay, and the deplorably poor strength of our P. W. D. force. With all these handicaps, however, we hope to complete satisfactorily the works that are launched for next year and thus make Cochin at the end of 1101 a much more comfortable and happy place to live in than it is to-day.

Mr. V. B. VAIDYANATHA AYYAR (*Superintendent of Excise Revenue*).

Mr. President, Sir,

I express my obligation to the members of this House who offered their criticisms on the policy and working of my department. Some of them, notably the members for Kunnamkulam and the South Ezhuva constituency deprecated the Excise policy of the Government, and stated that the raising of revenue by imposing tax upon drink was unjustifiable. I have only to say at this stage that, surrounded as our State is by the British and Travancore territories, our State cannot have and has not an Excise policy different from that followed by those territories. We find the existence of the drink evil, and it has been in existence from several centuries past. As it appears to have taken a deep root, it cannot be eradicated all at once by a single stroke of the legislature. It can only be gradually done away with, and it is with that object that a tax is imposed upon intoxicants, and it is increased from time to time. When the tax is increased, there is a marked tendency for a decrease in consumption, though from a financial aspect the revenue of the Government is bettered. It is this policy that has been followed in the Madras Presidency; and both our State and Travancore have adopted it. This policy is thus one which brings in the maximum of revenue with the minimum of consumption, as stated by the Finance Member in his Financial Statement, and is aimed at gradual Prohibition.

The member for the South Ezhuva constituency stated that, if the State should continue to levy tax on intoxicants and run a machinery for that purpose,

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the members of his community should be utilised to run it in preference to the members of other communities on account of the special and hereditary aptitude of the former in everything connected with cocoanut palms. I am afraid that the Government cannot reserve my department for the members of his community alone, but I assure the member that every opportunity is given to the members of his community along with the members of other communities to enter my department, and efficient hands are and will be entertained.

Mr. M. K. RAMAN (*Ezhuva South*).

May I know from the Hon'ble Member whether there are any persons among my community employed in the Excise Department ?

Mr. V. B. VAIDYANATHA AYYAR (*Superintendent of Excise Revenue*).

With regard to rebate of duty on ganja and opium purchased from British India, we have introduced the independent shop system with regard to ganja from next year with a view to obtain rebate, which has now been promised by the British Government from April 1925. We are taking steps to obtain a similar rebate of duty on opium also, and no stone will be left unturned to achieve our object.

The member for Narakkal stated that the consumption of drink was on the increase. Toddy and arrack constitute the main drink, and statistics will show that from 1098 there has been a steady fall in the number of trees tapped for fermented toddy and also in the consumption of arrack. The illicit practices that were prevalent before 1098 are, no doubt, prevalent even now ; but they have considerably decreased. I, therefore, confidently say that the consumption of drink is on the decrease.

The member for Vadakkancheri seems to think that, because the amount of tree-tax for fermented toddy has been steadily increasing from 1095, therefore, the consumption of drink has also been increasing. Before 1098 the policy of the Government had been low tree-tax and high rentals, but it has been changed into one of high tree-tax and low rentals, as the result of a conference between the Travancore Diwan and our Diwan.

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Dr. A. G. MENON (*Tattamangalam*).

When was it ?

Mr. V. B. VAIDYANATHA AYYAR (*Superintendent of Excise Revenue*).

In 1098 or 1099. I am not quite sure.

The increase in tree-tax after 1098 is, no doubt, marked; but this is due to the adoption of the new policy. In pursuance of this policy, tree-tax has been steadily raised from 1098, with the result that the rentals and the number of trees tapped have been steadily going down. This, coupled with the decrease in the consumption of arrack, as already stated, will clearly show that the consumption is on the decrease and not on the increase.

Mr. M. K. RAMAN (*Ezhuva South*).

May I know from the Hon'ble Member, Sir, whether the number of trees let out for fermented toddy is on the increase or decrease ?

Mr. V. B. VAIDYANATHA AYYAR (*Superintendent of Excise Revenue*).

It is on the decrease. The same member stated that, though the amount of tree-tax for jaggery toddy was shown in the budget estimate as Rs. 8,000 from 1095 till 1099, only Rs. 7,000 was budgetted for the years 1100 and 1101. Though Rs. 8,000 was budgetted for the years in question, the tree-tax came to that amount only in 1096, but in 1098 and 1099 it came only to Rs. 6,902 and 7,000, respectively. Further, the tree-tax for fermented toddy was very low till 1098; and it is from that year that it was being steadily raised. This led to a tendency for the misuse of jaggery toddy, and several cases were found out in 1097 where toddy shop-keepers had employed jaggery tappers for the supply of fermented toddy to their shops. To prevent such malpractices, the licenses of the offenders had to be cancelled, and more scrutiny had to be exercised in the matter of granting fresh licenses to jaggery tappers. This led to a slight fall in the number of trees taken for jaggery tapping, which naturally led to a fall in revenue on this account. And these are the reasons why only Rs. 7,000 was budgetted for 1100 and 1101.

Mr. MATHEW KOLADI VATAKKOT (*Kunnamkulam*).

Sir, may I know whether there is any tax for jaggery tapping in the Madras Presidency

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Mr. V. B. VAIDYANATHA AYYAR (*Superintendent of Excise Revenue*).

There is no tax for jaggery tapping in the Madras Presidency.

Mr. M. K. RAMAN (*Ezhuva South*).

Is there any objection for our Government to follow that system here also ?

Mr. V. B. VAIDYANATHA AYYAR (*Superintendent of Excise Revenue*).

It has been answered already in reply to the question put in by the member for the North Ezhuva constituency. We find these malpractices growing, as a matter of fact, and even now, wherever I go, during my tour, I actually meet with cases often where jaggery tappers use their trees for tapping fermented toddy.

Mr. M. K. RAMAN (*Ezhuva South*).

Are the members of the preventive force now trying to prevent this illicit practice ?

Mr. V. B. VAIDYANATHA AYYAR (*Superintendent of Excise Revenue*).

They are doing everything to prevent it.

Mr. M. KRISHNA MENON (*Vyttila*).

Sir, I wish to know whether the members of the preventive force are experts in climbing trees ? The change is effected from the top of the tree when they are climbing the trees.

Mr. V. B. VAIDYANATHA AYYAR (*Superintendent of Excise Revenue*).

They are not expected to climb trees. While most of the members were against the raising of any revenue from drink, the member for Chittur seems to feel uneasy on account of the fall in the revenue. He attributes this fall to the cry against drink and to want of tact on the part of the Excise Officers. The Government is not at all sorry if the fall in revenue is due to the former cause. Though the member has not stated in full what tact it is that the Excise Officers are deficient in, it would appear from his observation that, though the department has got the strength of a giant, it should not use such strength, he refers to the enforcement of the rules for the collection of the dues due to the Sirkar rather strictly. Undue laxity in

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enforcing the rules will result in deplorable consequences, as it has done in the past, not to speak of the premium it will give to the officers of the department to be led astray. If, therefore, by "want of tact" the member means the strict enforcement of the rules, I am sorry that the officers of the department will continue to be guilty of this charge.

Lastly, the member for Trichur remarked that the expenditure of 3 and odd lakhs of rupees for my department was very excessive. When he made this observation, the member for Mulakunnattukavu rightly and properly pointed out that the major portion of this expense, viz., more than 2 and a quarter lakhs of rupees, was for purchase of salt, which is really the case. The rest cannot, certainly, be regarded as high or excessive.

Mr. A. B. SALEM (*Jews*).

May I know why it was not put under Advances Recoverable, instead of putting both on the expenditure and receipt side?

Mr. V. B. VAIDYANATHA AYYAR (*Superintendent of Excise Revenue*).

It is not an advance.

Mr. CHAKKO CHERUVATHUR (*Vadakkancheri*).

May I know whether, in the granting of the licenses, licenses for tapping fermented toddy are given preference to applications from jaggery tappers?

Mr. V. B. VAIDYANATHA AYYAR (*Superintendent of Excise Revenue*).

They are not.

Mr. M. K. RAMAN (*Ezhuva South*).

May I know whether there was any application for jaggery tapping before the first of Chingam 1100?

Mr. V. B. VAIDYANATHA AYYAR (*Superintendent of Excise Revenue*).

That is for jaggery tapping for the year 1100.

Mr. M. K. RAMAN (*Ezhuva South*).

Any application presented in 1099?

Mr. V. B. VAIDYANATHA AYYAR (*Superintendent of Excise Revenue*).

I don't know. I can't say. Reference is necessary.

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Mr. CHAKKO CHERUVATHUR (*Vadakkancheri*).

May I know whether there was any delay in giving licenses to jaggery tappers in the beginning of 1100 ?

Mr. V. B. VAIDYANATHA AYYAR (*Superintendent of Excise Revenue*).

I can't say. There was absolutely no complaint

Mr. A. B. SALEM (*Jews*).

May I also elucidate one more point? How is the diversion of jaggery toddy tapping into tapping for fermented toddy prevented in Travancore and Madras ?

Mr. V. B. VAIDYANATHA AYYAR (*Superintendent of Excise Revenue*).

They are taking the same remedies as we are taking—constant patrol.

Mr. CHAKKO CHERUVATHUR (*Vadakkancheri*).

May I know from the Hon'ble Member what is the use of the restriction of giving jaggery license for only ten trees to one tapper ?

Mr. V. B. VAIDYANATHA AYYAR (*Superintendent of Excise Revenue*).

It is not ten. Ten, only in the case of sago trees; in the case of other trees, twenty. The principle upon which the restriction is based is that an ordinary tapper will be able to tap only so many trees, regard being had to his capacity.

Mr. CHAKKO CHERUVATHUR (*Vadakkancheri*).

May I know why the jaggery tappers are given licenses in two instalments or three instalments, as I understand ? First they are given license only for six months, and that license is granted for 5 trees at one time.

President.—Not for ten ?

Mr. CHAKKO CHERUVATHUR (*Vadakkancheri*).

Probably, he means, for the balance five, license is given only after six months.

Mr. V. B. VAIDYANATHA AYYAR (*Superintendent of Excise Revenue*).

It is a misconception. The fault lies with them. They apply only for five trees, and so they are given a

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license for five only. If they apply for a license for ten, they will be given a license for all together.

Mr. I. RAMAN MENON (*Superintendent of Agriculture and Panchayats*).

Sir,

There are, before this House, for consideration, lots of motions for the reduction of grants for the Agricultural Department. A few of the Hon'ble Members have even suggested the abolition of the Central Farm and the Cocoanut Station.

I must, at the very outset, express my inability to reply to motions of such a general character, nor is it possible for me to give you a detailed account of the work done by the department in the short time allowed by the rules.

I have prepared a short account of the work done by the department during the last 10 years. I regret it was not possible to get printed copies of this. I shall be obliged if you go through the typewritten copy and see the nature of the work done bythe department before passing any verdict.*

The scheme sanctioned in 1092 was after mature consideration and fully taking into account the representations made by the agriculturists at conferences held in a number of centres. I may assure this House that the department is not attempting anything that is impossible or impracticable. Even in the matter of agricultural machinery, I have, after a number of trials made by me, designed a few types of ploughs for the use of the ryots. These ploughs do not deserve any condemnation, for there is ample testimony from the ryots themselves that they are very useful implements.

In the matter of manures—another important subject connected with agriculture—I have made it a point to insist on the utilisation of all substances which are available in the State, such as fish, prawn, shells, oil-cakes, bones, &c., as I found that these substances were getting out of the country in very large quantities ; and I even suggested to the Government the desirability of taking steps to check the large export. I have been, during the last 10 years, incessantly pressing on the

*Vide appendix.

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ryots the necessity of conserving the farm-yard manure, for I found that, by conserving the farm-yard manure in a proper way, the total output of paddy in the State can be increased by at least one-fold.

To the charge of want of knowledge of local conditions levelled against me, I beg to submit before this House that I had plenty of opportunities of learning the actual conditions of the various taluks of the State and of the requirements of the people, long before I took up the appointment of the Superintendent of Agriculture, and that I have, as far as possible, adopted ways and means within the reach of the ordinary ryots of the State.

Mr. Watson, Deputy Director of Agriculture, Burma, who visited Malabar, Cochin and Travancore for studying the method of cocoanut cultivation, visited the Farm, and made the following remarks : —

" I have, with Mr. Raman Menon, visited the whole Farm and have been very much interested in seeing the way in which it is run.

" Attention is being paid specially to the use of local manures for paddy, and undoubtedly, this is more important than experimenting with high-priced chemical manures.

"The whole cropping system of the Farm is apparently designed to give a fair out-turn annually, which is, I think, working on the right lines, as at present a large number of State farms are run at too great a burden to the tax-payer.

"Once the Farm is properly on the way, I am sure the Superintendent will be able to supply much valuable information to the local ryots generally, though at present want of staff prevents experimental work from being carried out to any extent.

(*Sd.*) *Robert Watson.*

11—10—1922."

The members of the Travancore Economic Development Board visited the Farm in Edavam 1099, and made the following remarks:—

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"We have been taken round the Farm by Mr. Raman Menon, and we were happy to find that the work was most successful. The natural advantages have been turned to very good account. Every acre of the large area of the 400 acres shows unmistakable signs of scientific development and patriotic energy. The crops tried are those particularly suited to Malabar, and the methods followed are cheap and well-suited to the habits of the people. We may be allowed to say that Mr. Raman Menon's work, done in a very short period of 7 years, is highly commendable. We have visited the Farm with great pleasure and profit.

(Sd.) President and members of the Economic Development Board."

It will be seen from the above that I cannot plead guilty to the charge of introducing or advocating methods which cannot be adopted by the ryots of Cochin.

The object with which the department has been organised has not been properly understood by the several members who have moved for the reduction of grants. Agricultural Experimental Stations are not run for profit, nor is it possible to run them with profit. This important aspect of the question has been recognised everywhere.

In his valuable remarks on the budget, Mr. Achyuta Menon, the member for Mulakunnattukavu, surveyed the financial situation of the State, and laid special stress on the directions in which the State has to work hereafter for the well-being of the people; and one of the important matters to which he has drawn our attention is the increased production of food-crops.

The Agricultural Department is a pioneer institution. All pioneer institutions were once viewed with suspicion. I am not, therefore, in the least surprised, if the department under my charge is not properly understood, or is viewed with suspicion.

The majority of the members of the House represent people whose sole occupation is agriculture. If the members will examine the existing condition of agriculture carefully, in its various aspects, I am sure, they will be satisfied with the necessity for a

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department for solving the several problems connected with agriculture and allied industries. At this stage I do not wish to say anything further on this subject.

As I stated before, Agricultural Experimental Stations, like other educational or scientific institutions, can never be run with profit, nor are they run with profit anywhere, so far as I am aware. Mr. Mukherji in his book on Indian Agriculture says that, ordinarily, the cost of cultivating an acre of land in an Experimental Station may roughly be estimated at just double the cost incurred in a ryot's holding. This does not mean that we are to encourage wastefulness.

The Ceutral Farm.

In the Central Farm, we are doing the following work:—

1. Experimental and demonstration work;
2. Stock-breeding and dairying;
3. Horticulture—growing of fruit-trees, etc.;
4. Agricultural School.

These important items of work were arranged to be done in one centre, because it was thought and found by experience that it would be cheaper to have them in one centre, and that they will have more effective supervision than if they were located in different places.

The amount allotted for "Casual labour, etc.," about which some reference was made by some hon'ble members, represents the costs involved in all the operations connected with the different sections of work. No doubt, this allotment should have been split up into a number of sections, such as casual labour required for experimental work, the same required for demonstration, for orchards and plantations, for cattle-breeding, etc. This would involve the maintenance of a number of registers, and was not feasible with the one clerk with which the Farm office had to work.

Mr. CHAKKO CHERUVATHUR (*Vadakkancheri*).

May I know from the Hon'ble Member whether the spraying for arecanut disease, called *mahali*, was discovered by the Agricultural Department?

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